

Alone For the Holidays by teej_318

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Summary:

The Losers Club spends Christmas Eve together at Bill's home. When talking about their plans for the holiday, Richie is noticeably quiet, which concerns Eddie.

Alone For the Holidays

Christmas Eve

The Losers sat huddled around the fireplace in the Denbrough living room. They had already opened presents and had dinner so they were now enjoying each other's company before they would all have to go home for the night. Bill's parents had gone to sleep a little while before they had gathered around the fireplace. Georgie had fallen asleep on the sofa and was resting peacefully while Bill absentmindedly ran his hair through his brother's hair, which he had often done to get Georgie to fall asleep.

Bill took a sip of his hot chocolate before he set it down on the coffee table. His Mom had prepared mugs of hot chocolate for all of the Losers to enjoy before they departed for the evening. Mrs. Denbrough's hot chocolate was legendary; it was practically its own food group.

"So, what are you guys doing f-f-for Chr-Chri-Christmas?" Bill asked in a low voice so he wouldn't wake up Georgie.

"Me and my aunt are just having a quiet Christmas together," Bev replied. "She and I wanted to do something small this year, so we're just exchanging gifts and then watching Christmas movies all day."

"I've got some work to do on the farm," said Mike, shrugging. "Christmas doesn't mean we don't have work to do. But once all that's done, we usually spend most of the day making Christmas dinner. We usually go all out with dinner."

"We're just doing our gift exchange at home," said Ben. "We normally go to family or they come to us, but they decided to go visit the other side of the family. Bit of a relief, honestly."

Stan smirked.

"Well, it's hard to celebrate Christmas when you're Jewish and your Dad doesn't approve of the holiday," Stan said. "But we still do a gift exchange before Dad wakes up. He sleeps like the dead when he

doesn't have to work or anything."

"I'm probably gonna be watching movies all day with my Mom," Eddie said with a grimace. "Hopefully she'll fall asleep and I can get out of the room for a few hours."

Eddie glanced at Richie, who had remained rather quiet while everyone spoke. He was taken aback when Richie didn't make a "Your Mom" joke, despite Eddie setting him up for one. Eddie frowned at him.

"Richie?" Eddie prompted.

Richie seemed to snap out of a daze. It looked like he hadn't been paying attention to the conversation and was lost in his thoughts.

"Huh?" Richie asked, looking confused.

"Are you doing anything for Christmas, Rich?" Bev asked.

Richie seemed to stiffen slightly. Eddie was the only one who noticed and he frowned again at Richie. But Richie immediately shifted into his usual self and relaxed his position.

"Just hanging out at home," Richie said.

Eddie's eyebrows furrowed as he looked at Richie. Normally, Richie would have cracked a joke or two while answering a question. It was out of character for Richie to be so quiet and, well, normal. Eddie put his thoughts away for the moment, thinking he would simply ask Richie about it later.

"That ah-ah-all sounds f-f-fun," said Bill, grinning at all of his friends. "I'm gluh-gluh-glad we c-c-could all hang out to-to-tonight."

Eddie cursed the fact that Richie had a second floor bedroom. Though to be fair, Eddie also had a second floor bedroom, and Richie had sneaked in to Eddie's room on many occasions, so Eddie was willing to suck it up for Richie's sake. After leaving Bill's house, Eddie had resolved to see what was going on with Richie. Eddie noticed right away that the Tozier's car was missing from the driveway,

which made Eddie think that maybe Richie was home alone. But that couldn't be right.

Once he had finally reached Richie's bedroom window, Eddie was nearly out of breath from climbing up to the second floor. He was also shivering madly from the cold. Even though he had bundled up, the freezing air was still biting his exposed skin. Eddie took a moment to catch his breath before he leaned down and tapped on the window.

Predictably, Richie moved quickly in his room. Eddie watched Richie stand up and look toward the window, his eyes widening when he saw Eddie standing in the window, waving slightly at him. Richie hurried to the window and opened it.

"Eds!" Richie exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"I'll tell you in a minute, just let me get in; it's fucking freezing," Eddie said, shivering.

Eddie held out his gloved hand, which Richie took in his own. Richie helped Eddie into the room. Once Eddie was securely inside, Richie closed the window while Eddie took off his jacket, gloves and hat, and set them down neatly on the back of Richie's desk chair. Richie sat down on his bed and motioned for Eddie to sit with him. Eddie obliged Richie.

"So, what's up, Eddie Spaghetti?" Richie asked. "You missed me so much you just *had* to sneak into my room on Christmas Eve night?"

Though Richie was trying hard to joke, it was clear that his heart wasn't in it. He still seemed off to Eddie, as though he were hiding something that he didn't want Eddie to know. Eddie thought that maybe he knew what was bothering Richie, but he wanted to ask first.

"I'm just worried about you, Rich," Eddie said gently. "You were really quiet at Bill's tonight. I mean, it was nice not hearing your shitty jokes all the time, but it didn't feel the same. And when you told us your plans for Christmas, you were super quiet about it."

Richie sighed but didn't say anything. He turned away from looking at Eddie with a sad expression on his face. He looked like he was about to start crying.

"Chee?" Eddie asked softly. "Are your parents gone?"

"Why would you think that, Eds?" Richie asked in a shaky voice.

"Because their car wasn't out in the driveway. I didn't see it when I was walking over to climb to your window. Are they gone?"

Richie hesitated before he nodded slowly. He turned to look back at Eddie with a sad look in his eyes.

"It's stupid, I know, because I told them to go," Richie said. "My aunts and uncles and cousins don't really like me very much, so we haven't gone to the family Christmases in a while. But Mom really wanted to see her family, so I told them to go without me."

Richie looked down. Eddie could feel his heart breaking as he looked at Richie's face. He leaned closer to Richie and put his arms around Richie.

"Are you saying you're spending Christmas alone, Richie?" Eddie asked.

Richie nodded as he started to cry.

"Oh, Richie!" Eddie exclaimed as he pulled Richie in for a hug. "Why didn't you say anything?"

"I didn't want to bother you guys," Richie said. "And besides, I told Mom and Dad to go so they could see the family. It's not like I didn't know I would be spending Christmas alone."

"Richie, you could've told us!" Eddie said, exasperated, but also trying not to make Richie feel bad. "You didn't have to keep this a secret."

"I didn't want to be a burden," Richie mumbled.

"Hey," Eddie said, lifting Richie's chin gently. "You are never a

burden, Richie. I know you think that, but you're allowed to feel all of your feelings, no matter what. And you can talk to us, okay?"

Richie nodded as he held on to Eddie as if Eddie was a lifeline. Eddie felt so sorry for Richie, knowing that his best friend was hurting.

"I'm sorry for making you worry, Eds."

"Don't apologize, 'Chee. You're my best friend. I'm always happy to be here for you."

"Can you stay?" Richie asked. "At least until I fall asleep? I don't want to be alone when I go to sleep."

"Of course, Richie," Eddie said hurriedly. "I'm not going anywhere and I'm not letting you spend Christmas alone."

"Thanks, Eds," Richie said as he pulled out of the hug Eddie was giving him. He then laid down properly on his bed. Eddie followed Richie quickly and wrapped his arms around him. He pulled in Richie close and buried his head into Richie's chest. He saw Richie smile when he did that and he felt his spirits lift.

"Goodnight, Richie," Eddie whispered as he closed his eyes.

"Goodnight, Eddie Spaghetti."

Richie stirred awake when he felt someone gently rubbing his arm and whispering his name. He could tell it was Eddie because he recognized Eddie's voice, but he was also confused that Eddie wasn't in bed with him anymore. Richie slowly opened his eyes and saw Eddie was sitting down next to his bed. Eddie was blurry because Richie's glasses weren't on; he absently reached for them on his nightstand and put them on.

"Merry Christmas," Eddie said with a smile.

"Merry Christmas, Eds," Richie said, feeling much happier than he thought he would after he told his parents take the trip to see his relatives without him. "Thanks for staying last night. I don't know what I'd do without you."

"You never have to thank me, Richie," Eddie said. "Now, are you ready to get your present?"

"You got me a present?" Richie asked, shocked.

"Of course I did, 'Chee. Well, it's changed slightly, but I think you'll really enjoy it."

"What is it?"

"You'll have to come downstairs and see!" Eddie exclaimed, holding out his hand.

Richie sat up in his bed and grabbed Eddie's hand. Eddie laced their fingers together and pulled Richie out of the bedroom. Eddie seemed super excited to give Richie his gift and Richie couldn't help but grin at Eddie's enthusiasm. Eddie led Richie into the living room, which looked the same as the night before, with the Christmas tree standing in the corner with the gifts underneath it. Richie turned to Eddie, frowning, and was about to ask Eddie what was going on when several voices called out at once.

"Merry Christmas, Richie!"

The Losers all jumped up from the floor and were beaming at Richie. Georgie had always joined them and was carrying a present for Richie.

Richie's eyes widened as he realized all of his friends were in his living room. He turned to Eddie, who was beaming at him.

"You brought them here?" he asked, as if daring to believe what he was seeing.

"Christmas is about being with your family, Richie. And we're your family too," Eddie said.

"Yeah, I can't believe you didn't tell us!" Stan chastised as he rushed forward and pulled Richie into a hug.

"We love you so much, Richie," added Bev.

The rest of the Losers pulled Richie into a group hug. Richie nearly started crying because of how emotional they all made him feel. The hug lasted several minutes before everyone broke from it at once and they all went to sit down on the living room furniture.

“So, how did you guys get here?” Richie asked.

“Eddie called us all really early this morning,” Ben said.

“Yeah, he basically threatened all of us into coming here,” Mike said with a grin.

“Don’t exaggerate!” Eddie said, glaring at Mike, but only half heartedly.

“He said h-h-h-he would duh-duh-dump us as friends if we didn’t come,” said Bill.

“Okay, yeah I did say that,” Eddie said with a “you got me there” look at Bill.

“But we would’ve come anyway,” Bev said. “There’s no reason for you to spend Christmas all by yourself.

“Yeah, we love you, Richie!” said Georgie, who had plopped down in Richie’s lap and hugged him tightly.

“I love you all, too,” Richie said as he hugged Georgie back. “But I think I may love my Eddie Spaghetti most of all.”

“Don’t call me that,” Eddie said with a smile. Richie broke apart from his hug with Georgie and Georgie stood up to go sit with Bill. Richie pulled Eddie into a hug and held him tightly.

“Thanks so much for this, Eddie. This is the best Christmas present ever.”

Eddie smiled as he pulled himself out of the hug. He gave Richie a kiss on the cheek before he pulled Richie in for another hug.

“Merry Christmas, Richie. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Author's Note:

Hope you all enjoyed this little one-shot. It popped into my head while I was at work and I just had to write it and include it in my Christmas one-shots list!

I'll be writing more one-shots over the next few days, as today is my Friday. Stay tuned for more Byeler/Reddie/Freebat one-shots, including one that will feature all three!

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